

SAUK CREEK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

August 22, 2006

Daniel Ebert, Chairman
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
610 N. Whitney Way
P.O. Box 7854
Madison, WI 53707-7854

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Commissioners' Office

RE: Rockdale/West Middleton Transmission Line and PSCW Docket 137-CE-139:ATC's
North Madison To Huiskamp Transmission Project

Dear Mr. Ebert,

The Sauk Creek Neighborhood Association opposes the proposed 345-kilovolt transmission line along the State Highway 12 and 14 (Beltline) corridor between the Rockdale/West Middleton substations. Please include this letter in your application to the Public Service Commission. There are six major reasons for the Association's opposition:

1. **The need study conducted by ATC and the Energy Initiative used grossly overstated future demand projections to determine need for the project and did not adequately address alternatives to a new transmission line. A non-partisan need study for the County as a whole must be done that is not funded and overseen by a for-profit company that will benefit from the findings.**
2. **The Beltline route will cost much more than projected by ATC in its preliminary study and cannot be expanded easily at a later date.**
3. **The proposed Beltline route, which goes through a highly congested and densely populated corridor, will affect and endanger the lives of many more people than projected in initial studies.**
4. **The Beltline route will have a negative impact on wetlands and the UW Arboretum.**
5. **The unsightliness of the 120 foot high transmission line towers will impact significantly the future infill development and ultimately the commercial and residential property values along the Beltline.**

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Gas & Energy Division

- 6. If a new study determines there is a need for the project and all other alternatives to a new 345-kilovolt transmission line are not feasible, and we doubt this will be the case, then the Association believes that the impact of the infrastructure upgrading for Southern Dane County should be shared by all areas of Southern Dane County that benefit from it.**

The following is a brief discussion of each of the above points:

1) Need for a New Study: The 3.5% growth factor compounded annually, used in the ATC/EI study, is based on assumptions made from the last 6 years of an overheated economy and unprecedented growth in Dane County. We do not believe these assumptions are supportable. Further, we believe the study did not give enough consideration to other alternatives such as upgrading existing transmission lines, or the combination of small power plants, renewable energy production, and energy efficiency/conservation efforts to meet the Southern Dane County power needs. A major transmission line in any area, but particularly in a highly congested, urban environment, is incredibly destructive and all alternatives need to be extensively explored before decisions are made. We also believe that studies done by or on behalf of a for-profit company whose main business is the ownership, operation, maintenance and building of new power lines would seem, at best, to be biased. A new independent study should be done before major decisions are made.

2) Under Estimated Costs: The Association believes that ATC has greatly underestimated the costs of a Beltline transmission line. First, the construction of the Beltline transmission line will be a very complex project and we do not believe ATC has adequately addressed these costs in its preliminary study. ATC significantly underestimated the cost of the Arrowhead/Weston Project in northern Wisconsin. This much simpler project was originally estimated at \$163 million. With the project under construction, but not yet done, the cost has risen to \$420 million and may well go over \$500 million when mistakes in design are corrected. Second, we believe the costs of dealing with the Verona Road interchange will be much greater than planned. Either the line will have to be reconfigured if interchange decisions are made by the Department of Transportation before the line is built or the line likely will have to be moved if decisions aren't made until after the line has been built. Third, in the next 20 to 30 years, significant changes will have to be made to the Beltline to alleviate the ever increasing congestion. This means additional costs of moving the transmission line as traffic lanes are added and interchanges are redesigned. Fourth, ATC admits that the compactness of the Beltline environment precludes the double circuiting of the line for further expansion 20 to 30 years from now.

3) The Project will Affect More Lives than Estimated: ATC materials indicate that only three percent of the Beltline route is residential. We question this figure since our investigations show that 19 City of Madison neighborhoods either border on the Beltline or are in close proximity to the Beltline. This does not include neighborhoods in the Cities of

Monona, Fitchburg and Middleton. It is hard to imagine that a corridor that is as densely populated as the Beltline will affect less people than the other two proposed routes as stated by ATC. Further, building a major power line along such a congested area ultimately will affect the safety of those who use the Beltline. Downed power lines resulting from ice or wind storms will create major chaos along the Beltline. Also, once the Beltline transmission line is built, it would play a major role in decisions to alter the Beltline to meet safety concerns as traffic increases over the years. Major physical barriers such as 345-kilovolt transmission lines will have a negative effect on the types of solutions considered by highway engineers as they grapple with designs to deal with increased traffic problems. To think that the transmission line will not limit the alternatives to deal with Beltline safety issues is akin to believing the Beltline will not have to undergo major expansion and changes over the next 20 years to deal with additional traffic loads.

4) Negative Impact on Wetlands and UW Arboretum: The UW Arboretum is considered to be the oldest and most varied collection of restored ecological communities in the world, including tall grass prairies, savannas, several forest types and wetlands. Many of these attractions are next to, or near the Beltline corridor. Arboretum trees lining both sides of the Beltline already show considerable stress from increased Beltline traffic. Building a major power line next to the Arboretum would add significantly to the stress on these trees and surrounding areas and do irreparable harm to this Wisconsin treasure. Further, the proposed line will cross a significant area of wetlands in and near the City of Monona. The line would bring additional stress to these areas, also.

5) Impact on Infill Development and Property Values: A power line of the size proposed is always a major blight on the corridor it uses. The Beltline, a major corridor into the City of Madison, is in some areas very attractive and, in others, incredibly ugly. The Beltline, however, is slowly transforming its image. The new infill development along Todd Drive is an example. The proposed 345-kilovolt transmission line will stop future infill projects like Todd Drive, relegating this doorway to Madison to continued ugliness and decay. Along with this will come significant decreases in both commercial and residential property values. This is a very significant price that neighborhoods, businesses and the City of Madison will have to bear on behalf of the entire service area.

6) Shared Responsibility for Infrastructure Upgrading: Finally the Association believes that the burden of infrastructure building for Southern Dane County should be shared by all the areas that will benefit. The Beltline corridor now provides major transportation and commercial infrastructure to much of Southern Dane County. Four of the area's television stations and transmitting towers are along this corridor as well as other communication towers. Much of Southern Dane County uses the corridor to get to work, shop, do business, and transport its goods. To continue to load infrastructure growth into this corridor is not cost effective, safe, or fair to the neighborhoods along it. Other areas need to do their share of the heavy lifting in infrastructure development.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our opinions on the Rockdale/West Middleton Transmission Line Proposal. We hope that you will consider our concerns about the ATC/EI study and the Beltline route and take them into consideration when you make your final decisions.

Please also make this letter a part of the Sauk Creek Neighborhood Association's intervention in PSCW Docket 137-CE-139:ATC's North Madison To Huiskamp Transmission Project dated August 12, 2006.

Sincerely,



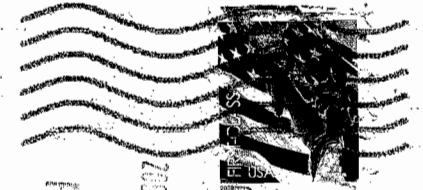
Robert J. Kramer, President
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cc: Jose M. Delgado, President and CEO, ATC
Mayor Ciesiewicz, City of Madison
Kathleen Falk, Dane County Executive
Scott McDonald, Chair, Dane County Board of Supervisors
Peggy A. Lautenschlager, Attorney General
Mayor Thomas Clauder, City of Fitchburg
Mayor Jon Hochkammer, City of Verona
Mayor Robb B. Kahl, City of Monona
Mayor Douglas Zwank, City of Middleton
Kevin McSweeney, Friends of the Arboretum
A.J. Amato
Robin Sterns, Citizens for Responsible Energy

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